



Sun safety

Sunburn is caused by overexposure to ultraviolet radiation (UV rays). While the symptoms are usually temporary (like red skin that is painful to the touch), skin damage is cumulative throughout a person's life and can develop into serious long-term health effects, including **skin cancer**. Skin cancer is the most common of all cancer types. About one third of all new cases of cancer in Canada are skin cancers, and the rate continues to rise.

Mild sunburn results in skin irritation and redness and can be safely treated at home. Severe sunburn requires medical attention.

What to do if someone gets a sunburn:

- Immediately remove the person from the sun.
- Place the person in a cool (not cold) shower or bath, or apply cool compresses several times a day.
- Avoid creams or lotions that may hold heat inside the skin or may contain numbing medication (i.e. benzocaine or lidocaine). Aloe gel can be used.
- Offer the person extra fluids for the next two to three days.

Get immediate medical attention if the person has:

- Sunburn that forms blisters or is extremely painful.
- Facial swelling.
- Nausea, fever or severe chills.
- Pale, clammy or cool skin.
- Rapid pulse or rapid breathing.
- Headache, confusion or a feeling of faintness or dizziness.
- Signs of dehydration (increased thirst, dry eyes and mouth, no urine output).
- Eyes that hurt and are sensitive to light.



Remember:

- The best treatment for sunburn is prevention.
- Apply sunscreen 20 minutes before you go outside; reapply 20 minutes after going outside and at least every 2 hours after that. Use a generous amount.
- There is no such thing as a "healthy tan." Unprotected sun exposure causes skin and eye damage, premature aging of the skin, and a weakened immune system.
- Skin cancer usually appears in adulthood, but can be caused by excessive sun exposure and sunburns in childhood. You can help prevent skin cancer by protecting your skin and your children's skin from the harmful rays of the sun.

(Source : www.canadiensensante.gc.ca)

Pesticides and your health

Pesticides are used to control pests, fungal diseases, certain bacteria, rodents, weeds, etc. These products are mainly used in agriculture, horticulture, extermination, landscaping and industrial areas.

If pesticides can have a toxic effect on harmful organisms, they can also affect the environment and non-targeted organisms such as humans. Although Canada has a certification system that aims to ensure the safety of pest controlling products on the market, the fact remains that approvals are made for specific uses and they do not exclude all risks.

In Quebec, **nearly 1,500 annual cases of severe pesticide poisoning** are reported to Centre anti-poison du Québec.

Several simple measures can significantly reduce the levels of exposure to pesticides:

- Extermination: products available for the extermination of unwanted organisms may present some health risks, especially if they are used inside the residence. It is recommended that you hire a professional exterminator to make this work.
- Landscaping: some healthy cultural practices help minimize the use of pesticides. Visit Health Canada's website to get advice on how to obtain a [healthy lawn](#).
- Food: it is always better to wash your food before consumption. You could also opt for local or organic food (www.equiterre.org).

(Source : www.msss.gouv.qc.ca)

